

Statement of US envoy to Pakistan

156. SHRISANTOSHBAGRODIA:

SHRI O.T. LEPCHA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken view of the reported statement of the US envoy to Pakistan asking India to communicate with Pakistan directly instead of raising the issue of its involvement in recent Mumbai blasts, in public;

(b) whether Government have made an assessment of US's policy towards India's stand on the cross border terrorism in this region in view of such statement;

(c) if so, details thereof;

(d) whether Government have conveyed its view to the US Government; and

(e) if so, the details of their response?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Government of India has taken cognizance of remarks made by US Ambassador to Pakistan, Ryan Crocker, on 3rd October, 2006 regarding evidence in the Mumbai train blasts. In response, MEA Spokesperson stated on 5th October, 2006: *"We have seen the remarks attributed to Ambassador Crocker. Coming from a democracy like United States, one would have expected Ambassador Crocker to understand that democratic governments have a primary responsibility to keep their own people fully informed."*

(b) to (e) As two democracies confronted with the common challenge of terrorism, U.S. and India have a robust dialogue on counter terrorism through the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism that was established in January, 2000. The seventh meeting of the JWG on Counter Terrorism was held on 19-20 April, 2006 in Washington. As part of this Dialogue, both sides continue to periodically exchange views on terrorism, including on cross border terrorism.